

NEWS RELEASE



OFFICE OF THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA

San Diego, California

***United States Attorney
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For Immediate Release

NEWS RELEASE SUMMARY - March 30, 2005

United States Attorney Carol C. Lam announced that guilty pleas have been entered by the last remaining defendant in a case alleging a conspiracy to provide material support terrorists.

Syed Mustajab Shah entered his pleas of guilty today before United States District Court Judge M. James Lorenz to one count of conspiracy to distribute heroin and hashish, and one count of conspiracy to provide material support to terrorists. In connection with the guilty pleas, Shah admitted that he conspired with codefendants Muhamed Abid Afridi and Ilyas Ali to distribute approximately five metric tons of hashish and 600 kilograms of heroin originating in Pakistan to undercover United States law enforcement officers. Additionally, he admitted that the codefendants sought to receive, as partial payment for the drugs, four "Stinger" anti-aircraft missiles which they intended to then sell to the Taliban, an organization they knew at the time to be the same as Al-Qaeda.

According to the indictment, on September 15, 2002, Shah, Afridi and Ali traveled from Karachi, Pakistan, to Hong Kong, People's Republic of China, to meet with undercover law enforcement officers from the United States to negotiate for the sale of large quantities of hashish and heroin. On September 16, 2002,

Shah, Afridi and Ali agreed that the purchase price of 5 metric tons of hashish and 600 kilograms of heroin could be offset against the cost of 4 “Stinger” anti-aircraft missiles. On September 18, 2002, at a hotel in Hong Kong, Shah, Afridi, and Ali told undercover agents that they intended to sell the “Stinger” anti-aircraft missiles, discussed during the previous meeting, to members of the Taliban, which they indicated was the same as Al-Qaeda.

According to Assistant United States Attorneys Michael P. Skerlos and Todd Robinson, who prosecuted the case, Shah, Afridi and Ali were arrested in Hong Kong on September 20, 2002, by Chinese law enforcement authorities, at the request of the United States Government. They were indicted by a federal Grand Jury on October 30, 2002.

United States Attorney Lam said, “Our efforts to combat terrorism extend not only to the terrorists themselves, but also to those who provided them with weapons and other forms of support.”

FBI Special Agent-in-Charge Daniel R. Dzwilewski commented, "Whether the activity is drug trafficking to fund terrorist activities or weapon smuggling to create mass destruction, the FBI is committed to dismantling terrorist organizations and prosecuting those who support these organizations. As an investigative arm of the Department of Justice, we will continue our efforts to keep our citizens and communities safe."

Muhammed Abid Afridi and Ilyas Ali are scheduled to appear before Judge Lorenz for sentencing on April 3, 2006, at 8:30 a.m. following their pleas of guilty on March 3, 2004, to felony charges of conspiracy to provide material support to terrorists and conspiracy to distribute heroin and hashish. Judge Lorenz scheduled a sentencing hearing for Syed Mustajab Shah on June 19, 2006, at 8:30 a.m.

DEFENDANT Syed Mustajab Shah **Case Number: 02CR2912-L**

SUMMARY OF CHARGES

- Count 1: Title 21, United States Code, Sections 841(a) and 846 - Conspiracy to distribute heroin and hashish - Maximum Penalties: Life in prison, \$4,000,000.00 fine
- Count 3: Title 18, United States Code, Sections 2339B(a)(1) and (d) - Providing Material Support to Terrorists - Maximum Penalties: 15 years in prison, \$250,000.00 fine

AGENCY

Federal Bureau of Investigation